Strategy For The Development Of The Cariboo Section Of The Gold Rush Trail

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GOLD RUSH TRAIL STRATEGY

Cariboo Section

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INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1

In early 1986, the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture authorized the preparation of a strategy for the development of a themed scenic route for that part of the Trans Canada Highway between Hope and Cache Creek. This initiative was taken largely in response to the opening of Phase 1 of the Coquihalla Highway. It was felt that the development of a fast speed freeway into the interior would result in more leisurely paced traffic on the Fraser and Thompson canyons portion of the Trans Canada Highway. It was thought that this could be conducive to the development of a themed scenic route which would appeal to the Province's large touring market. The objectives of the strategy were to:

- strengthen the appeal of the Province to the U.S. and Canadian touring market by the development of a scenic heritage route;
- attract private sector investment for the development of tourism attractions and facilities along the route;
- increase tourism revenues along the route.

In the course of the preparation of the strategy it became evident that the Fraser and Thompson canyons portion of the Trans Canada had extensive scenic and heritage resources which could be further developed to increase the appeal of the route to B.C.'s touring market. It also became evident that the route should be extended to Barkerville to the north and New Westminster to the southwest in order to establish a longer and more marketable entity. This route was named the Gold Rush Trail by the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture. Since the adoption of the strategy, the Ministry has been active in marketing the Gold Rush Trail as well as assisting local governments, businesses and community groups in the implementation of the strategy.

In early 1987, the Ministry authorized the preparation of a tourism development strategy for that part of the Gold Rush Trail between Cache Creek and Barkerville. While the initial strategy prepared in 1986 recommended that the route be extended to Barkerville, it did not set out a development strategy for that part of the route. This document contains the tourism development strategy for that part of the Gold Rush Trail between Cache Creek and Barkerville.

1.1 Objectives of the Strategy

As in the case of the previous strategy, this document is not to be construed as a definitive blue print for the development of the Gold Rush Trail between Cache Creek and Barkerville. Rather, it is intended to provide general direction as to how the private sector can take advantage of existing and future business opportunities which will arise as a consequence of the Ministry's marketing and development initiatives for the Gold Rush Trail. The strategy contained in this document also identifies public sector initiatives required to stimulate private sector investment. The specific objectives of this strategy document are:

- to review and analyze the existing and potential tourism resources of the Gold Rush Trail between Cache Creek and Barkerville;
- to determine which of the tourism resources of this part of the Gold Rush Trail support the overall theme;
- to identify potential opportunities for private sector investment;
- to identify public sector initiatives which are required to create the necessary business climate for private sector investment;
- to expedite the development of tourism opportunities identified in the course of preparing the strategy.

This strategy document does not address all tourism development opportunities in the Cariboo region. The specific objectives of this strategy are to address only those opportunities which would contribute to the development of the Gold Rush Trail. The Cariboo region is rich in tourism resources which cater to other tourism markets including guest ranching, fishing, hunting, river rafting, etc. These opportunities are addressed only in cases where these opportunities can be drawn on to strengthen the Gold Rush Trail or where the Gold Rush Trail can serve to introduce the touring market to other tourism opportunities in the region.

1.2 Study Area

The subject of this strategy is the Highway No. 97 and Highway No. 26 corridors between Cache Creek and Barkerville. Included in the study area are the various communities located along the highway. Reference is also made to the numerous circle tours and back roads that provide access to many of the tourism resources of the Cariboo.

1.3 Approach and Methodology

A similar approach to that used in the preparation of the initial Gold Rush Trail strategy was used in the preparation of this strategy. It was the objective of the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture to avoid a lengthy study of the tourism opportunities along this part of the Gold Rush Trail. Rather, the objectives of the Ministry were to:

- assist proponents of tourism developments already in progress;
- motivate the private sector, local governments and community groups to undertake the development of the tourism resources along the Gold Rush Trail;
- focus on a limited number of achievable projects.

The approach taken in this strategy was based on these specfic objectives. The following steps were taken in the preparation of the strategy:

- preparation of general inventory of tourism resources of the Cariboo section of the Gold Rush Trail based on published reports and site visits;
- identification of tourism opportunities, issues and constraints through consultation with:
    - local entrepreneurs involved in tourism;
    - representatives of the Cariboo Tourist Association;
    - local government representatives;
    - repesentatives of Provincial Government agencies.
- attendance at meetings in the communities of the Cariboo to identify the preferred projects in support of the Gold Rush Trail initiative;
- preparation of draft report;
- review of draft report with business, local government, etc.;
- finalization of the strategy and development of implementation strategy.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The structure of this report is as follows:

Section 2 - provides a general description of the tourism resources of the Cariboo section of the Gold Rush Trail;

Section 3 - sets out the opportunities and the strategy for tourism development along the Cariboo section of the Gold Rush Trail;

Section 4 - describes the specific action plans required to implement the strategy.

2.1 Introduction

This section provides a general overview of tourism resources of the Cariboo section of the Gold Rush Trail. These include heritage resources, natural resources, outdoor recreation resources, existing tourist facilities, and human resources which can be drawn on for the further development of the Gold Rush Trail.

2.2 Historical Resources

The Cariboo section of the Gold Rush Trail is rich in heritage resources, many of which reflect the importance of this area during the gold rush period. While many of the features date back to the gold rush era, the area is also rich in heritage resources from other eras including native Indian history, the fur trade, and pioneer ranching and settlement.

Preservation and enhancement of the historical resources located in the Cariboo has been initiated by numerous organizations including historical societies, private interests as well as the Provincial and local governments. Historical features in the corridor area include the following:

South Cariboo Museum;
108 Mile House;
Williams Lake Historic Museum;
132 Mile House Original Road House;
Original Hudson's Bay Company Store, Quesnel;
Cornish Whale, Quesnel;
Le Bourdais Park Museum;
Cottonwood House
Cottonwood Historic Park;
Blessings Grave;
Bohanon House, Quesnel;
Quesnel Museum;
The Town of Wells;
Wells Museum;
Barkerville Historic Park;
Theatre Royale, Barkerville;
Richfield Courthouse, Barkerville.

While the developed historical features in the corridor present a significant number of attractions, the potential exists for further development of historical resources in the form of interpretive centres, heritage sites and historical points of interest throughout the corridor. A key issue which has been raised by residents assisting in the preparation of this strategy is the lack of accurate information concerning heritage sites.

2.3 Natural and Scenic Resources

The past actions of rivers, glaciers and weather have combined establish an attractive setting which is able to support a wide variety of tourism markets.

The Fraser Basin, from Williams Lake to north of Quesnel is dominated by benchlands, terraces and steeply sloping and eroding banks along rivers. The Cariboo Plateau, an area famous for ranching, consists of gently rolling hills and many kettle lakes. The area is largely within the Cariboo Aspen/Logdepole Pine Vegetation Zone with open grassland and parkland along the banks of the Fraser and fairly dense forests in the upland areas. The parkland and semi-open forests provide an appealing landscape for extensive outdoor activities such as hiking and horseback riding. Various species of game fish are found in the Cariboo and the region has developed a reputation for sports fishing. Wildlife resources in the Cariboo include mule deer in basin and plateau areas near the Fraser, Chilcotin and Quesnel Rivers; moose in forested areas; and Big Horn Sheep in the Farwell Canyon area.

The more significant natural features in the area include the following:

- the Painted Chasm, a spectacular box canyon near Clinton;
- the Hoodoos in Pinnacles Park near Quesnel;
- the Bowron Lakes;
- the Mount Begbie Lookout in Clinton;
- the Big Horn Sheep Sanctuary in Farwell Canyon near Williams Lake.

2.4 Outdoor Recreation Resources

The Highway No. 97 and Highway No. 26 corridors present significant opportunities for outdoor recreation activities. The major activities in the area are outlined below.

2.4.1 White Water Rafting

White water rafting on the Fraser has increasingly gained in popularity over the past few years. There are several operators on the Fraser, with Soda Creek as a major starting point for runs to Lillooet. Spectacular scenery, mountains, deep canyons, ranchland and breathtaking rapids make river rafting a very popular activity.

2.4.2 Canoeing and Kayaking

Excellent opportunties for canoeing and kayaking exist in the natural and wilderness areas surrounding in the Cariboo. The Bowron Lake chain attracts canoeists from across North America and around the world. Thousands of lakes in the area provide canoeing opportunities, while the Cariboo River and the Quesnel River offer both canoeing and kayaking opportunities.

2.4.3 Big Game Hunting

Many licenced guide outfitters lead big game hunting expeditions, operating out of communities along the Gold Rush Trail. Moose are the most popular big game animals. Expeditions also hunt for black and grizzly bear, deer, cariboo, mountain goats and sheep.

2.4.4 Sport Fishing

Some guided fishing trips are available in the area and there are numerous fishing camps and fishing lodges accessible from the Gold Rush Trail.

2.4.5 Hiking

Hiking and camping opportunities exist in the Cariboo. The Alexander MacKenzie Heritage Trail provides an opportunity for hiking and the interpretation of a major heritage resource.

2.4.6 Trail Riding

The Cariboo provides excellent opportunities for trail riding with numerous outfitters, guides and guest ranches in the area. Organizations offer rides that cater to hunters, fishermen, photographers, and naturalists as well as to those who simply wish to trail ride. Accommodations and entertainment is often offered in conjunction with trail rides providing a unique vacation lifestyle to international clients. Several guest ranch operations offer trail riding in the area, including the following:

- 108 Resort;
- Charley's Guest Ranch;
- Circle H Mountain Lodge;
- Circle J Ranch and Youth Retreat;
- Flying "U" Guest Ranch;
- Hills Health and Guest Ranch;
- Springhouse Trails Ranch.

2.5 Tourism Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure refers to man-made developments which provide a service to tourists. These tourist-oriented facilities, developments or structures include the following:

- man-made attractions;
- tourism accommodation facilities;
- Provincial and regional parks;
- hospitality businesses;
- transportation facilities and services.

2.5.1 Tourist Attractions

Tourist attractions in the area relate heavily to the history of the area with numerous museums and original buildings. Attractions also include facilities such as golf courses, and mill tours. An overview of tourist attractions in various communities along the Gold Rush Trail is provided below.

Clinton:

Clinton Museum
Mount Begbie Lookout
Big Bar Provincial Park
South Cariboo Museum

100 Mile House:

108 Mile Golf and Country Resort
The Hills Resort

132 Mile House:

Original Roadhouse

Williams Lake:

Williams Lake Historical Museum
Historic Bullion Gold Mine
Station House Gallery
Gibralter Mines Tours
Paul Sisson's Wildlife Historical Museum
Scout Island Nature Centre
Downtown Mural Tour
Williams Lake Golf and Country Club

Soda Creek:

Sternwheeler terminus

Quesnel:

Pinnacles Park
Cottonwood House
Heritage Corner
Pulp and Plywood Mill Tours
Le Bourdais Park Museum
Quesnel Golf Course
Dragon Lake Golf Course
Original Hudson's Bay Company Store
Cornish Wheel
Quesnel Museum
Barnhard Express Stage Coach

Wells:

Wells Museum
Wells Townsite in general

Barkerville:

Restored Gold Rush Townsite

2.5.2 Tourist Accommodation/Tourist Services

Tourist accommodation facilities are developed in most of the communities along the corridor, with facilities concentrated in 100 Mile House, Williams Lake, and Quesnel. Table 2.1 summarizes the private tourist accommodation presently available in the corridor.

TABLE 2.1

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE TOURIST ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES IN CORRIDOR*

	Motel Units	Hotel Units	Camp-ground Sites	Resorts Units	Guest Ranch Units	RV Park Sites	TOTAL SITES UNITS
Clinton	33		50				83
70 Mile House			30		30		60
100 Mile House	94		60	15		10	179
Lac La Hache	41		309	12			362
Williams Lake	296		40				336
Blue Lake			32				32
McClease Lake			27	14			41
Cuisson Lake			30	2			32
Dragon Lake			55				55
Quesnel	261		127				388
Wells	20	21					41
Hixon	16		74				90
Prince George	558	743	347				1,648
Total	1,319	764	1,181	43	30	10	3,347*

*within 5 miles of Highway 97.

2.5.3 Provincial and Regional Parks

The four Provincial parks along the Gold Rush Trail which offer campsites are Lac La Hache, Barkerville Historic Park, Bowron Lake and Ten Mile Lake. Other parks offer day use, hiking trails or contain historic sites. A summary of Provincial park facilities is provided in Table 2.2:

TABLE 2.2

SUMMARY OF PROVINCIAL PARK FACILITIES

Provincial Park	AREA HA.	CAMP SITES	COMMENTS
Chasm	141		day use, 4 km by gravel road from Highway No. 97
Cariboo Nature	98		no road access
Lac La Hache	24	83	paved roads, day use
Pinnacles	124		8 km rough road from Highway No. 97
Cottonwood House Historic	11		day use, paved roads
Blessing's Grave Historic	1		paved roads
Barkerville Historic	457	170	day use, paved road
Bowron Lake	123,117	25	18 km gravel road from Highway No. 97
Ten Mile Lake	241	142	day use, paved road
Total	124,214	420	

2.5.4 Transportation

.1 Highways

Highway 97 provides the primary north - south route through the corridor. Highway 26 provides access to Barkerville, Highway 20 branches off to Bella Coola and Highway 24 branches off to Bridge Lake and Little Fort.

.2 Rail Service

B.C. Rail provides passenger rail service between Lillooet and Prince George north bound on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays and south bound on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The trip takes approximately eight hours, starting at 12:50 p.m. from Lillooet or 7:30 a.m. from Prince George, with flag stops at numerous locations along the route. The rail route closely parallels Highway 97 from Clinton to Prince George.

.3 Bus Service

Scheduled bus service along Highway 97 from Clinton to Prince George is offered by Greyhound Lines of Canada Ltd. Presently the company operates two runs along the corridor, with the primary links from Vancouver through the Fraser Canyon and the Coquihalla connecting in Cache Creek and proceeding along the corridor to Prince George and points beyond.

.4 Air Service

Several communities in the corridor operate air strips useable by recreational aircraft or charters (e.g 100 Mile House, 108 Mile House, etc.). Regular scheduled air service is available to Quesnel and Williams Lake.

2.6 Human Resources

Human resources are significant for the development of tourism. Human resources include the following:

- attitudes of the public and political bodies toward tourism development;
- level of organization for the development and marketing of tourism;
- number and quality of community events which may be of interest to tourists;
- number of tours and excursions;
- labour supply for tourism related employment.

2.6.1 Level of Public and Political Support for Tourism Development

A high level of public and political support for tourism development exists in the communities along the Gold Rush Trail. Tourism is seen as a means for diversification of local economies. Declining employment in resource oriented sectors has led communities to look toward other sectors for jobs. Communities along the Gold Rush Trail realize that the highway is the key to marketing this area and the increased number of tourist travellers will result in higher incomes and more jobs in their communities.

.2 Level of Organization for Tourism Development and Marketing

The Gold Rush Trail from Clinton to Barkerville area falls primarily within the mandate of the Cariboo Tourist Association which is responsible for marketing of tourism in the Cariboo Region. The Cariboo Tourist Association publishes travellers guides and vacation planners for the area, available at no charge to the public.

The Provincial Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture has published "The Gold Rush Trail Guide" which highlights attractions and events throughout the area. The Province also works with local associations through the Partners in Tourism program to help promote local tourism.

Local Chambers of Commerce have also worked to advance tourism in the corridor by supporting publications. Some tourist guides have been published largely through the support of local advertisers, indicating considerable support for tourism development and a significant level of organization to coordinate the publication efforts.

Local museum and heritage societies have also shown interest in tourism development by expanding hours of museum operations and publishing pamphlets on heritage resources in the area.

.3 Special Events

The events presently staged along the Cariboo section of the Gold Rush Trail are as follows:

Clinton:

May Ball & Rodeo	Victoria Day Weekend
United Nations & Oldtimers Rodeo	August Long Weekend

100 Mile House:

World Championship Triathlon	January
Cariboo Cross-Country Ski Marathon	February
Snowcross BCSVA Championships	February
Figure Skating Ice Carnival	March
Western Days	May Long Weekend
Little Britches Rodeo	3rd Weekend of May
South Cariboo Square Dance Jamboree	June
Community Day	July
All-Breed Horse Show	2nd Weekend of July
FCA Arts & Crafts Show (108)	2nd Weekend of July
Great Cariboo Ride	1st & 2nd Weekends, August
Fall Fair	2nd Weekend of September.

Williams Lake:

Open Horse Show	May
Endurance Ride	3rd Weekend of July
Williams Lake Stampede	July 1 to 4
Quarter Horse Show	August
Springhouse Fly-In	August
Annual Kinsmen Inner Tube Race	August
4-H Beef Festival	September
Fall Fair	September

Quesnel:

Dog Sled Race Championships	January
Cariboo Wheelers Square Dance Spring Jamboree	April
Trade Fair	May
Oldtime Fiddlers Contest	June
Billy Barker Days & Rodeo	July
Fall Fair and Family Day	September

Wells/Barkerville:

Theatre Royal	June - September
Wells Homecoming & Baseball Tournament	June
Dominion Day in Barkerville	July
Fire Brigade Picnic	July
Island Mountain School of Arts	July - August
Gold Rush Casino & Dance	August
Wells Heritage Weekend	September

Lac La Hache:

Winter Carnival	February
South Cariboo Square Dance Jamboree	June

.4 Tours and Excursions

Developed tours in the Gold Rush Trail corridor are dominated by river rafting tours and trail riding tours. River rafting tours are provided by several operations, with Soda Creek and Williams Lake as the main starting points for many river rafting excursions.

Several guest ranches in the area offer trail rides and excursions ranging from a few hours to 2 weeks in length, with a variety of price ranges.

Package tours are also available that feature train or bus travel and include a variety of attractions. Package tours often combine river rafting, guest ranching, trail riding and visits to historic sights.

While tours and excursions are available, the choice is relatively limited, with only a few tour packages directly oriented toward attractions along the Gold Rush Trail.

.5 Labour Supply

While shortages may occur for some specialized occupations in the tourism sector, labour supply is generally not considered a constraint to future tourism development.

This section sets out the strategy for the development of tourism attractions and infrastructure in the Cariboo which will contribute to the development of the Gold Rush Trail.

A number of considerations were taken into account in the preparation of the strategy. These are as follows:

- the strategy concentrates on those initiatives which support the further development of the Gold Rush Trail. It is acknowledged that the Cariboo region is rich in tourism resources which appeal to a broad range of tourism markets. The further development of these markets in the region is encouraged by the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture;

- the strategy has been prepared with the recognition that the human and financial resources which can be brought to bear on tourism development in each community and in the region are finite. A good strategy ensures the proper relationship of the projects to be undertaken to the resources available to support them. For this reason, the number of projects identified in the strategy for each community and for the region as a whole are limited to those which can reasonably be supported in each of the communities;

- the projects set out in this strategy have been identified through consultation with a broad range of community groups including Councils, the Regional Board of the Cariboo Regional District, tourism industry representatives and other community groups. An attempt was made to reach a consensus on the type of project to be pursued in each community in order to expedite the process of implementing this strategy. The projects identified in this strategy are not those of the consultant or the Ministry but those of the groups consulted during the process of preparing the strategy;

- the strategy recognizes that the development of tourism cannot be left entirely to either the private sector or the public sector. The most productive strategies are those which recognize the complex interrelationship of the private and public sectors in the development of tourism facilities.

The strategy is described on the basis of those projects which are specific to individual communities in the region and those which pertain to the entire region or route.

3.1 Community Initiatives

3.1.1 Clinton Area

The Village of Clinton is the gateway to the Cariboo and is a service centre to the ranching and agricultural community in the southern Cariboo. The Village has had a colourful past and played a prominent role during the Gold Rush as a government centre. The community contains numerous heritage buildings and sites, many of which have yet to be inventoried and designated as heritage sites.

.1 Opportunities

The Village of Clinton and surrounding area has opportunities to significantly increase its appeal to the touring market.

- While efforts have been made to give the community a "western" look (e.g. facades, etc.) more needs to be done in terms developing attractions in the community which appeal to the touring market;

- the community could take better advantage of its location as the gateway to the Cariboo as a theme for the development of tourism attractions;

.2 Strategy for the Clinton Area

The following strategy has been prepared by community representatives of Clinton and the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture for the further development of the Gold Rush Trail.

Preparation of Concept Plan for Tourism Development

In the course of developing the strategy for the Clinton area, numerous ideas and suggestions were discussed directed at developing attractions in Clinton which would compel visitors passing through to stop and interpret the colourful past of Clinton. The community is not totally certain as to how to best implement this objective although the idea of developing a pioneer theme town has support in the community.

In addition to reconstruction of heritage buildings and the further redevelopment of building facades in the core area, artifacts and interpretive facilities would be displayed throughout the downtown area in well designated display areas.

Prior to such development taking place, however, the community agrees that a concept plan should be prepared which would provide guidance as to how the community can best implement this idea.

3.1.2 100 Mile House Region

The Village of 100 Mile House presently serves as a tourism service centre for the South Cariboo, catering predominantly to the touring market in the summer months and the cross country skiing market in the winter months.

The community is located in a region which has established itself as a destination area for tourists seeking a guest ranching experience, fishing, hunting and cross country skiing. A number of major guest ranches and fishing resorts are located north and southeast of the Village itself.

The Village has a well developed hospitality industry which provides a range of tourist accommodations and services.

.1 Opportunities

The 100 Mile House region has numerous tourism development opportunities which would complement the further development of the Gold Rush Trail. These may be summarized as follows:

- there is an opportunity to develop additional attractions in the community which would be of interest to the touring market and consistent with the Gold Rush Trail theme;
- there is a need to undertake minor improvements to the 108 Mile Airport in order to accommodate both charter flights and scheduled air service; this would increase the opportunities for fly/drive or fly/rail tours.
- there is a need to modify the highway through the community to permit safer access and egress from the highway to the community;
- there is an opportunity to further develop and market numerous circle tours in the 100 Mile House region to allow tourists to access the region's natural and historic resources;
- little research has been carried out to document the history of the 100 Mile House area and to identify all of the historic sites in the area;
- there is a need to develop an overall tourism theme for the 100 Mile House area which is complementary to the Gold Rush Trail theme yet establishes a tourism identity for the Village and the surrounding area.

.2 Strategy for the 100 Mile House Area

The following strategy for tourism development in the 100 Mile House area has been prepared by community representatives in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture.

Development of Overall Tourism Theme

Representatives of the 100 Mile House area indicated that while the 100 Mile House area played a role in the Cariboo Gold Rush, the major factor in the growth and development of the community was the logging industry. For this reason the Village wishes to adopt the logging theme as the prevailing theme for its marketing and development initiatives oriented to the touring market.

The adoption of the logging theme by the Village is consistent with the overall strategy of preventing duplication in the tourism themes of the various communities along the Gold Rush Trail.

Development of Attractions Oriented to the Touring Market

Representatives of the 100 Mile House area have indicated a desire to concentrate on a limited number of projects which will be consistent with the chosen theme. Specific projects being pursued by various groups and agencies in the community are as follows:

- building a replica of a turn-of-the century lumber mill in Centennial Park. It is intended that this facility would recreate turn- of-the-century milling methods. The mill would be operated by a concessionaire during the summer months and would offer a well designed interpretation program. Commercial outlets would be permitted on site. The replica would be constructed by the Village of 100 Mile House using funds available under various Federal and Provincial employment creation programs;

- development of a museum which would focus on the growth of the logging industry in the 100 Mile House area. The museum would include demonstrations of logging equipment and would be the site of a logging show. The museum could also sponsor demonstrations of log house building from past to present. Responsibility for the development of the museum and organization of demonstrations and the logger show would be assumed by the 100 Mile House Historical Society;

- development of a demonstration forest. A demonstration forest which would allow tourists the opportunity to interpret forestry practices in the Cariboo is proposed for the Village's woodlot. The responsibility for the development of the demonstration forest would be assumed by the Village of 100 Mile House.

- restoration of the 108 Mile Roadhouse and ranch buildings. The 100 Mile House Historical Society is presently restoring the 108 Mile Roadhouse and ranch buildings. The restoration of this facility, when complete, will provide for the reinforcement of the roadhouse theme developed elsewhere on the Gold Rush Trail (e.g. Ashcroft Manor, Hat Creek House, Cottonwood House). The opportunity for limited commerical development on site (e.g. crafts, souvenirs, specialty food products) should be explored.

Implementation of Scheduled Air Service to 108 Mile Airport

The 108 Mile Airport is a well developed facility which could support increased air charters and scheduled service. Discussions should commence with established air carriers to initiate a scheduled air service to the 108 Mile Airport. Some upgrading of the airport facility may be required including the installation of navigational aids and the construction of a small terminal. A scheduled service would greatly increase the attractiveness of the 100 Mile House area for fly/drive or fly/train excursions.

Further Development of Tour Packages

One of the drawbacks to the further development of the touring market is the Cariboo is the distance and time required to access this area from major market areas. The market could be expanded by further development of fly/drive tour packages which would only be possible if scheduled air service is developed to the 108 Mile Airport.

Further Development of Regional Tours

There are opportunities for the development of regional tours based on the existing and proposed attractions in the 100 Mile House area. These tours could be designed as guided or unguided tours and could be sponsored by existing resorts or hotels or as stand alone commercial ventures. Tours could be based on the interpretation of the logging theme, fishing, ranches, local industies, local artists including artists at the Canim Lake Reserve.

3.1.3 Williams Lake Area

The City of Williams Lake is a major tourism service centre on the Gold Rush Trail, located at the crossroads of Highway No. 97 and Highway No. 20.

.1 Opportunities

As in the case of other communities on the Gold Rush Trail, the Williams Lake area has great potential for the further development of tourism facilities which complement the Gold Rush Trail. These are as follows:

- there is a need to develop a tourism theme for the community which will complement those of the other communities and serve to unite the various attractions and events in the community;

- there is an opportunity to develop a tourism focal point in the community which would serve as a major attraction in its own right as well as introduce the tourist to the many other attractions and tourist services in the community;

- the Williams Lake area has many opportunities for outdoor recreation including fishing, hiking, etc.;

- the community has established an excellent reputation for its rodeo; there are opportunities to build on this reputation;

- the community has excellent hospitality and accommodation facilities and has scheduled air service. There are excellent opportunities for the development of fly/drive packages;

- the Williams Lake area is rich in historical and recreational resources particularly the Likely and Horsefly areas which played a prominent role in the Cariboo Gold Rush; there are opportunities to make these areas more accessible to the touring market.

.2 Strategy for the Williams Lake Area

The following strategy for tourism development in the Williams Lake area has been prepared by community representatives in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture.

Development of Overall Theme

The theme most appropriate for the Williams Lake area is the ranching theme. This theme is well established in the community (e.g. stampede) and complements the themes chosen by the other communities in the Cariboo.

Development of Tourist Focal Point in the Community

At the present time, the City of Williams Lake lacks a tourism focal point. Community representatives believe that the development of a tourism focal point is essential if the community is to appeal to the touring market. An opportunity to develop such a focal point has arisen due to the recent acquisition of the Stampede Grounds by the City from B.C. Rail. A number of concepts for the development of the Stampede grounds have been advanced by representatives of the community. These include:

- a stampede "hall of fame" structure to display the memorabilia of the stampede;
- reconstruction of an Old Cariboo theme town;
- expansion and completion of the campground;
- children's theme park.

Such development would not in any way detract from the use of the grounds for the stampede or existing users of the grounds.

It has been agreed, however, that prior to any development taking place on the grounds, additional planning is necessary. The types of issues which must be resolved are:

- market potential of the various proposed facilities to be located on the grounds;
- the users permitted on the grounds and their relationship to one another;
- the design of the grounds in general and the specific facilities located on them;
- the required services to accommodate the proposed development;
- the financial feasibility of various components to be developed on the grounds and the level of public sector investment required to attract private sector participation.

In addition to the physical development of the stampede grounds, efforts would also be directed at establishing events which would add to the attractiveness of the site for tourists. These include:

- mini rodeos, or demonstration of "cowboy" techniques;
- barbecues catered by local restaurants;
- square dances, old time fiddling contests and other forms of entertainment.

Further Development of Scout Island Park

A key attraction for the touring market is access to water (e.g. lakes, rivers, etc.). Williams Lake is one of the few communities along the Cariboo section of the Gold Rush Trail which provides access to a swimming beach. Further development of Scout Island Park and the swimming beach should be undertaken to increase the appeal of this area for tourists. Development could include:

- increased landscaping;
- further development of the beach area;
- paving of parking area;
- additional picnic tables.

Development of Additional RV Park Facilities

An excellent RV Park has been developed south of Williams Lake. During the park summer months, serviced RV spaces are in short supply resulting in tourists passing through the community in search of spaces elsewhere. An additional RV Park is required in the community. Expansion and upgrading of the park at the stampede grounds is one option which should be further explored. If this option is not viable, the private sector should be encouraged to develop such a facility elsewhere near the community.

Development of Regional Tours

The Williams Lake region is rich in heritage and recreational resources and attractions. Historical sites include:

- 153 Mile Store which as been turned into a private museum;
- Quesnel Forks, a former gold rush boom town located 65 miles east of Williams Lake;
- the Bullion Mine, one of the largest hydraulic gold operations in the world;
- 132 and 137 Mile Houses;
- Soda Creek, site of a gold rush boom town.

Access to these areas are by back roads.

A number of circle tours have been established for tourists wishing an off highway driving experience. These include:

- Likely/Horsefly Tour
- Enterprise/Chimney Lake Tour
- Soda Creek/Meldrum Creek Tour
- Farwell Canyon/Hanceville Tour
- Chilko/Tatlayoko Lakes Tour.

To facilitate increased use of regional tours the following actions should be taken:

- encourage the private sector to increase the number of rental vehicles available. Vehicles should be well suited for backroad driving. Tour packages should provide not only information regarding attractions but also information to permit safe operation of the vehicles on the backroads. At the present time, many tourists driving RV or conventional automobiles are not prepared or able to take advantage of backroad tours.

- market the tours more aggressively by providing additional information (e.g. videos) of the tours at tourist information facilities.

3.1.4 Quesnel Area

Quesnel, like Williams Lake is a major tourism service centre on Highway No. 97 and is located just south of the junction of Highway No. 97 and Highway No. 26 which provides access to Wells, Barkerville and the Bowron Lakes. The community has a well developed hospitality industry.

.1 Opportunities

Quesnel is located in an area where the Gold Rush theme can be fully developed. The opportunities for tourism developments which would complement the further development of the Gold Rush Trail are:

- opportunity to further develop Quesnel's waterfront and to link the various tourism attractions and facilities presently located in the community to increase the tourism appeal of these attractions;
- opportunity to expand the tourist information facilities at the intersection of Highways 97 and 26 in order to attract visitors to the Wells/Barkerville area;
- opportunity to increase the number of tours, both within the community (e.g. heritage walking tours) as well as regionally (i.e. to Barkerville).
- opportunity for the development of additional accommodation facilities.

.2 Strategy for the Quesnel Area

The following strategy has been prepared by community representatives of Quesnel and the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture in furtherance of the Gold Rush Trail initiative.

Overall Theme

The Quesnel area, perhaps more than any other area along the Gold Rush Trail (other than the Likely, Horsefly and Barkerville areas) reflects the Gold Rush theme. For this reason, the Gold Rush theme with emphasis on the role of Quesnel as a terminus for paddle wheelers was chosen for the Quesnel area.

Development of Waterfront Heritage Park

The City of Quesnel has developed a number of parks along the Fraser River Waterfront. A number of artifacts have been exhibited at Ceal Tingley Park. There are opportunities to expand both the size of waterfront park and the scope of development to establish a heritage park of significance in the community. Specific measures which could be taken are:

- gradual acquisition of additional parkland on the Quesnel and Fraser Rivers to permit the development of a continuous park system;

- placement of additional historic artifacts (e.g. steam shovel) in the park system including interpretive plaques;

- in conjunction with the overall interpretive program recommended for the Gold Rush Trail, development of an interpretation centre at the confluence of the Quesnel and Fraser Rivers oriented to interpreting the role of Quesnel as a steamboat terminus during the gold rush. Artifacts such as the remains of the SS Enterprise could be displayed at the centre;

- development of a small amphitheatre to permit the staging of small re-enactments, historical vignettes or for other types of entertainment;

- use of the Old Fraser River Bridge for pedestrian access to the park system along the west ride of the Fraser River. Opportunities would be provided for concessionaires to establish small street vending businesses on the bridge;

- opportunity for concessionaires in the park including gold panning, etc.;

- in the long term, docking facilities for a replica of a paddlewheeler which would be moored at the waterfront;

- development of parking facilities in convenient locations and suitable for the parking of recreational vehicles.

Prior to such development occurring, a master plan would be prepared to guide the development of the park.

Completion of the Hudson's Bay Building

The City of Quesnel has initiated the restoration of the Hudson's Bay Building, a HBC Store dating to 1867. It is proposed to use the facility as a cultural or tourism facility when it is completed. The use of this facility as a tourism facility (e.g. entertainment) is endorsed given its location adjoining the proposed heritage park.

Development of a New Full Service Hotel in Quesnel

The proposed development of a new full service hotel in Quesnel is endorsed. Such a facility will reinforce the role of Quesnel as a tourism service centre in the north Cariboo and further encourage the use of Quesnel as a staging point for tours to Barkerville and other tourism attractions in the region.

Development of City Tours

Some efforts have been made by the City of Quesnel and other groups to organize walking tours in the City. The City has many historic sites and other points of interest which would appeal to tourists, particularly if the waterfront heritage park is developed. Guided walking tours should be organized and marketed to bus tours, and to other visitors. Guided tours could be made more interesting if tour guides were in period dress, and if the tour included some entertainment and refreshments along the way. Tours could also include the use of antique automobiles or other more interesting means of travel.

Development of Tours to Barkerville

Quesnel is in the enviable position of having attractions of Provincial significance nearby. Attractions based on historic features include Barkerville, Cottonwood House and the Wells townsite. There are opportunities to develop guided tours of Barkerville and other historic attractions along Highway No. 26 for visitors who do not wish to use their own vehicles.

Development of Other Regional Tours

Aside from Barkerville, Cottonwood House and other historic features along Highway No. 26, there are numerous opportunities to develop interesting day tours to other points of interest or recreational in the opportunities Quesnel region. These include:

- Alexander MacKenzie Heritage Trail
- Fort Alexander;
- Fish Pot Lake;
- Recreational rafting on the Quesnel or Fraser Rivers;
- Bowron Lakes.

Further Development of Information and Interpretation Facilities at the Junction of Highway Nos. 26 and 97

The present information facilities at the junction of Highway Nos. 26 and 97 could be expanded to include an interpretation centre and rest area. Efforts have been made recently to give more prominence to the site by the placement of the world's largest gold pan at the junction. The interpretation facility would be an integral part of the overall interpretation program for the Gold Rush Trail as discussed in Section 3.2.1 of this report. Ideas which have been put forward for the development of facilities at the junction include:

- construction of a scale replica of St. Savior's Church;
- picnic tables, washroom facilities;
- landscaping of the site including the development of proper parking areas and foot paths to the Gold Pan.

Establishment of U-drive Excursions

The Quesnel area, like other areas in the Cariboo provide numerous opportunities for backroad touring and a number of excellent circle tours have been developed. As many visitors to the region are not able or prepared to use their own vehicles, efforts should be directed to providing suitable rental vehicles, recreation equipment and information packages to visitors who wish to explore backroad areas.

3.1.5 Wells

The community of Wells is located near Barkerville. The community developed rapidly in the 1930's when the Cariboo Gold Quartz mine established the townsite to accommodate its workforce. Mine operations ceased in 1967 and the population of the townsite dropped dramatically.

At the present time the townsite has a permanent population of 200 which rises to 500 during the placer mining season.

A great many of the buildings constructed by the mining company remain although a great number are beginning to deteriorate. Some efforts are being made to restore some of these buildings and to put them to commercial or institutional use. Examples include the Wells Hotel, and the museum. Wells has an opportunity to increase its tourism appeal, given its significant heritage resources and its proximity to Barkerville and the Bowron Lakes. A considerable amount of planning, however, must be done before actual development takes place.

The first step is the adoption of the community plan which would identify areas of the community which are to be developed for tourism commerical uses. It is intended by the existing residents that certain sections of the Wells townsite would be restored/reconstructed to reflect the character of the community in the 1930's. The plan also includes design guidelines for new development in that part of the townsite which is to be restored.

Following the adoption of the official community plan, plans for the restoration and reconstruction of the heritage area would be prepared. Restoration would be a gradual process and would be funded chiefly through the various programs of the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture.

Following the adoption of the community plan, efforts should also be directed by the community, through the Cariboo Regional District, to prepare the economic development strategy for the community based on its tourism potential. Rather than a broad based strategy, the process should identify specific business opportunities in the Wells area and provide an indication of their feasibility. The strategy should also set out a marketing strategy through which investment could be attracted to the community.

3.2 Initiatives Which Apply to the Region as a Whole

3.2.1 Establishment of Interpretation Program

In the strategies proposed for the southern portion of the Gold Rush Trail, the development of an interpretation program based on the heritage theme was emphasized.

Consistent with the strategy for the southern part of the Gold Rush Trail, it is strongly recommended that such an interpretation program be developed as soon as possible. The program should:

- ensure that adequate historical research is undertaken to permit the preparation of interpretive materials;
- identify the locations for the development of interpretation facilities;
- identify the approach and the media to be used for individual interpretation facilities;
- specify the type of facility to be developed at each location;
- identify how the development of interpretive facilities should be financed and operated, including the use of Provincial and Federal employment programs;
- identify an implementation program.

3.2.2 Preservation and Enhancement of the Visual Resources Along the Gold Rush Trail

The visual character of the Gold Rush Trail north of Cache Creek is significantly different from that in the Fraser and Thompson Canyons. Steep canyon walls give way to a gentler topography characteristic of the interior plateau. Nevertheless, the visual resources of the Cariboo, while different from the canyons are equally deserving of protection.

The following specific actions should be taken to protect the visual quality of the Cariboo section of the Gold Rush Trail:

- control of signage along the highway, particularly large billboards in rural areas;
- preparation of a detailed landscape analysis by the Ministry of Forests and Lands to guide landscape management decisions in future forest harvesting;

- upgrading of unsightly highway rest stops and pullouts;
- seeding of highway cut slopes;
- screening of gravel extraction pits located near the highway;
- screening of auto wrecking yards which adjoin the highway.

3.2.3 Development and Upgrading of Public Roadside Facilities

Public roadside facilities including signage are an important feature in the establishment of the Gold Rush Trail in that they:

- provide for the comfort and convenience of travellers (e.g. washrooms, picnic areas, rest areas);
- provide opportunities for interpretation of the features of the corridor;
- provide a standard for development of private facilities.

The present development of roadside facilities along the Cariboo section of the Gold Rush Trail requires a detailed assessment to ensure:

- consistency with the proposed interpretive program for the Gold Rush Trail (i.e. located in areas of historic or natural/scenic significance);
- a standard of development which is consistent with the importance of Gold Rush Trail as a tourism route;
- that facilities are located in areas which provide for safe access and egress to the highway;
- that facilities are suitable for the accommodation of a range of vehicles including recreation vehicles and tour buses.

Following this assessment, a program of upgrading of public roadside facilities by the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, and Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture is supported. Many roadside facilities which are presently developed are of low quality (not paved or landscaped), are located in areas which do not permit views or other forms of interpretation or are developed so as to be unsafe.

3.2.4 Special Events Which Promote the Corridor Area as a Whole

There is a need for the private sector and community groups along the Gold Rush Trail to develop special events which draw attention to the tourist attractions along the route and reinforce the corridor as a tourism attraction. Events which may be considered include:

- promotional events during which employees of tourism businesses along the Gold Rush Trail dress in period costume;
- vintage car rallies;
- wagon trains using BX style wagons (each community would sponsor a wagon and use it as a tourist information booth as the wagon train stops in specific communities).

The objective for the development of the Cariboo Section of the Gold Rush Trail will not be realized if the project described in Section 3 of this report are not carried out. In this Section, a simple implementation strategy is described. The implementation strategy sets out:

- the agency responsible for carrying out specific actions;
- the nature of the action to be carried out;
- the time frame for carrying out the action.

4.1 Implementation of Community Specific Projects

Table 4.1 - identifies the implementation strategy for each of the community oriented projects described in Section 3.

TABLE 4.1

Implementation Strategy
Cariboo Section of Gold Rush Trail

Community: Clinton

Projects	Responsible Agency	Support Agencies	Task Description	Intended Result
Preparation of Concept Plan for the development of additional tourism attractions.	Village Council	MTRC (Development) MMA Chamber of Commerce	Preparation of plan to guide future development of tourism attractions in Clinton.	Development of additional tourism attractions in Clinton

TABLE 4.1

Implementation Strategy
Cariboo Section of Gold Rush Trail

Community: 100 Mile House

Projects	Responsible Agency	Support Agencies	Task Description
Construction of Replica of Old Lumber Mill	Village Council	100 Mile House Historical Society Chamber of Commerce MTRC	Construct replica of old lumber mill in Centennial Park.
Establishment and Development of Museum	100 Mile House Historical Society	Village Council Chamber of Commerce MTRC	Planning and development of museum based on logging theme.
Demonstration forest	Village Council	MTRC Chamber of Commerce MOFL	Development of demonstration forest for tourism use.
Completion of 108 Roadhouse and Ranch Restoration	100 Mile House Historical Society	MTRC	Restoration and reconstruction of 108 Mile House ranch for tourism purposes.
Air Service to 108 Airport	Cariboo Regional District	Village Council	Further development of airport and negotiation with carriers for scheduled service.
Development of Tour Packages	Private Sector	MTRC	Development of fly/drive tour packages to 100 Mile House.
Development of Regional Tours	Private Sector	MTRC	Development of additional regional tours.

TABLE 4.1

Implementation Strategy
Cariboo Section of Gold Rush Trail

Community: Williams Lake

Projects	Responsible Agency	Support Agencies	Task Description
Further development of rodeo grounds	City Council	Chamber of Commerce MTRC MMA	Preparation of concept plan and financial analysis to determine the best way to develop the rodeo grounds to establish a tourism focal point in the community.
Further development of Scout Island Park	City Council	Recreation Commission	Further development of Scout Island Park to attract more tourists to Williams Lake.
Development of additional RV Park	Private Sector		Development of additional RV park facilities.
Regional Tours	Private Sector		Development of additional tours to regional attractions; increase the number of rental vehicles.

TABLE 4.1

Implementation Strategy
Cariboo Section of Gold Rush Trail

Community: Quesnel

Projects	Responsible Agency	Support Agencies	Task Description
Waterfront Heritage Park	City Council	Chamber of Commerce MTRC	Development of waterfront heritage park including numerous attractions.
Hudson's Bay Store	City Council	Chamber of Commerce MTRC	Completion of Hudson's Bay Store restoration and reconstruction.
Full Service Hotel	Private Sector	MTRC	Development of full service hotel in Quesnel.
City Tours	Chamber of Commerce	City Council MTRC Local hospitality business	Establishment of more City tours.
Regional Tours U-Drive Excursions	Private Sector	MTRC	Establishment of more regional tours.
Highways 26 and 97 Junction Development	Chamber of Commerce	MTRC	Further development of junction.

TABLE 4.1

Implementation Strategy
Cariboo Section of Gold Rush Trail

Community: Wells

Projects	Responsible Agency	Support Agencies	Task Description
Preparation of restoration plans	Wells Historic Society	MTRC	Preparation of restoration plans for building located in restoration area of the community as described in the OCP.
Economic Development Strategy	Cariboo Regional District	Wells APC	Preparation of economic development and marketing strategy.

4.2 Implementation of Provincial Government Initiatives

In addition to community specific initiatives, the strategy described in Section 3 sets out a number of key initiatives required on the part of Provincial agencies. These initiatives are vital to the development of the Gold Rush Trail and are necessary to support the specific initiatives which will be undertaken by local government and community groups.

Interpretation Progam

The most important of these initiatives is the development of an interpretation program for the entire Gold Rush Trail. Responsibility to developing the program rests with the Development Branch of Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture with the major involvement of the Heritage Conservation Branch, and local government including (in the case of the Cariboo) the Cariboo and Thompson Nicola Regional Districts. The following specific initiatives are required to develop an interpretation program for the Gold Rush Trail:

- preparation of development plan for interpretation facilities along the Gold Rush Trail which would indicate the locations of facilities, the required displays, the design and type of facility to be developed at each location and how each facility will be constructed, financed and operated.

- historical research to prepare required interpretive materials;

- preparation of interpretation materials;

- construction of various interpretive facilities.

Wherever possible, community museums and heritage sites should be incorporated into the overall interpretation program.

In addition, roadside interpretive facilities should coincide whenever possible with public rest areas and other roadside facilities.

Development and Upgrading of Public Roadside Facilities

A further initiative required of the Provincial government is the development of new roadside facilities and the upgrading of existing facilities to a standard commensurate with the importance of the Gold Rush Trail as a tourism route. Again a development plan is required to identify the number and location of roadside facilities to be developed in conjunction with each site. Responsibility for the preparation of this plan would rest jointly with the Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture and the Ministry of Transportation and Highways.

Improving the Visual Resources of the Gold Rush Trail

Improving the visual characteristics of the Gold Rush Trail in the Cariboo is the responsibility of a number of agencies including:

Ministry of Transportation and Highways in terms of enforcing their highway signage policy and reclaiming gravel pit operations which are visable from the highway.

Ministry of Forests and Lands for implementing their visual management program for forest harvesting.

Local government for enacting screening bylaws.

Special Events

Responsibility for establishing and coordinating special events in the Carbioo rests with individual local governments with the assistance of the Cariboo Tourist Association and other local societies and organizations.